

rather than waiting for all 50 States to adopt uniform laws. S. 761 will provide the basic foundation, or the rules of the road, for the future of electronic commerce in America. It will foster the continued expansion of electronic commerce. More importantly, it will empower consumers to take part in a vibrant segment of our economy. It will afford consumers from all across America the real opportunity, if they so choose, to take advantage of electronic commerce. This, to me, is the crux of this legislation. The ability of our citizens in all 50 States to improve the quality of their lives. S. 761 provides that ability.

Some have expressed concern that this measure places a higher standard and unnecessary burdens on the on-line world than those in effect for the off-line world. I hope it does not. I believe a good-faith effort was made to provide the flexibility necessary for those with that great entrepreneurial spirit and imaginative ability to advance the Internet and electronic commerce. If, over time, bureaucracy does indeed impede the bill's intent, I expect that Congress will again assume responsibility and take corrective action.

The participation of several Members of Congress was integral to this bill's enactment. They include the chairmen of both the House and Senate Commerce Committees, Chairman BLILEY and Chairman MCCAIN, Chairman GRAMM of the Senate Banking Committee, and Chairman HATCH of the Senate Judiciary Committee. I extend my thanks to them and to all of the members of the conference for their attentiveness and commitment to this important issue.

I also want to take a few moments to express my special appreciation to my colleague and good friend, Senator ABRAHAM. Senator ABRAHAM recognized early on the extreme importance of electronic signatures. It was his initiative that led to the 105th Congress' enactment of the Government Paperwork Elimination Act, a significant first step toward the eventual broad use and acceptance of electronic signatures. Senator ABRAHAM's continued stewardship, vision, and tireless efforts have led to the next logical step of now affording secure and accessible opportunities in electronic commerce for the private sector and millions of consumers. I believe no other Senator worked as hard on, or knows as much about, this issue as Senator ABRAHAM. Without his hard work, keen judgment, and persistence, I do not believe we would be voting on this conference report today. Senator ABRAHAM is to be commended for his leadership in this area, and I look forward to working with him on other important technology issues facing Congress.

It goes without saying that Congress could not operate without the dedicated efforts of staff. I want to identify those Senate staffers who worked hard to prepare this legislation for consideration: Renee Bennett, Moses Boyd,

Jeanne Bumpus, Cesar Conda, Robert Cresanti, Makan Delrahim, Geoff Gray, Martin Gruenberg, Carole Grunberg, Dave Hoppe, Jack Howard, Jim Hippe, Kevin Kolevar, Chase Hutto, Jim Hyland, Julie Katzman, Maureen McLaughlin, Paul Margie, Mike Rawson, Dena Ellis Rochkind, Lisa Rosenberg and Jim Sartucci, as well as my former Congressional Fellow, Steven Apicella. I thank them all.

Electronic signatures is an innovative technology whose time has come. S. 761 will remove barriers to their use in a timely and useful manner. S. 761 will make it easier for millions of Americans to use electronic commerce. S. 761 will help stimulate our nation's economy. And S. 761 will preserve America's leadership in the global marketplace. I am proud that the 106th Congress has taken this action.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

Mr. ABRAHAM. Mr. President, I thank my colleagues on both sides of the aisle for their work on the legislation which has just passed. This is an extraordinarily important bill which will essentially open up opportunities in e-commerce that have previously not been existent for Americans. It will be a tremendous incentive to our economy. I express to all my colleagues my appreciation for their hard work on the legislation. It is a significant accomplishment for the Congress.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nevada.

#### LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, on behalf of Senator LEAHY, I ask unanimous consent that he be permitted to be absent from the service of the Senate today, Friday, June 16.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### EXECUTIVE SESSION

NOMINATION OF BEVERLY B. MARTIN, OF GEORGIA, TO BE U.S. DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF GEORGIA

NOMINATION OF JAY A. GARCIA-GREGORY, OF PUERTO RICO, TO BE U.S. DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE DISTRICT OF PUERTO RICO

NOMINATION OF LAURA TAYLOR SWAIN, OF NEW YORK, TO BE U.S. DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will now go into executive session and proceed to the nominations of Beverly B. Martin, of Georgia; Jay A. Garcia-Gregory, of Puerto Rico; and Laura Taylor

Swain, of New York, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read the nominations of Beverly B. Martin, of Georgia, to be U.S. District Judge for the Northern District of Georgia; Jay A. Garcia-Gregory, of Puerto Rico, to be U.S. District Judge for the District of Puerto Rico; and Laura Taylor Swain, of New York, to be U.S. District Judge for the Southern District of New York.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the nominations are confirmed, the motions to reconsider are laid upon the table, and the President will immediately be notified of the Senate's actions.

The nominations were considered and confirmed.

#### LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will now return to legislative session.

#### MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There will now be a period for the transaction of morning business with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 5 minutes each.

The Senator from Idaho.

Mr. CRAIG. Mr. President, I have reserved an hour of that time. I know there are other Senators who wish to speak. I will not use the whole hour. I would like to change the order. My colleague from Montana has a couple of minutes on an issue. My colleague from Minnesota wishes to speak for 10 minutes. Then I would assume my hour. We will not take all that hour. The Senator from Washington has comments she wants to make during this period of time. I ask unanimous consent that it follow in that order.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota is recognized.

#### THE DAIRY INDUSTRY

Mr. GRAMS. Mr. President, I will take a few minutes this morning to talk about an industry that is very important to the State of Minnesota, and that is our dairy industry.

June is National Dairy Month, and I come to the floor today to pay tribute to the family farmers who rise early every morning to supply fresh milk to our Nation. We as consumers assume there will always be dairy products in our grocery stores, without considering the hard work that is a daily requirement to get them there.

I grew up on a dairy farm myself, and I can remember those early morning milkings before going to school and again, of course, when I got home. I don't take for granted the hard work required of dairy farmers to make a living. Unfortunately, for Minnesota dairy producers, it is becoming harder